

LICENSING COMMITTEE (NON LICENSING ACT 2003 FUNCTIONS)

Agenda Item 16

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Additions to the Blue Handbook for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire, Drivers, Vehicles and Operators		
Date of Meeting:	17 November 2011		
Report of:	Head of Planning and Public Protection		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Seymour	Tel: 29- 6659
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To approve additions to the Handbook for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire, Drivers, Vehicles and Operators. "The Blue Book".

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Committee approve the additions to the handbook contained in (Appendix 1) and that they should be added to the appropriate sections of the handbook before printing and distribution.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The handbook was designed to combine many bye laws, conditions, advice and information for hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators previously in various and separate forms and was first approved by committee in February 2007. It is a useful aid to officers in explaining the council's requirements to existing and potential drivers, proprietors, operators and guidance to garages carrying out fitness and compliance tests on behalf of the council.
- 3.2 The 2nd edition was approved by committee on the 23rd June 2011.
- 3.3 It was intended that the handbook would be produced in a booklet format and made available for all hackney carriage & private hire, drivers, proprietors & operators. However, this has been delayed so that the additions regarding accessibility issues contained in appendix 1 may be added in the appropriate sections before printing at the request of The Fed Centre for Independent Living.
- 3.4 The proposed changes cover four areas.
 - Designated Vehicles

- Duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs
- Advice for drivers when carrying disabled passengers
- Ergonomic Requirements for wheelchair accessible vehicles

Their inclusion in the Blue Book would give further advice and clarity to drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators.

- 3.5 Committee previously resolved to have a designated list of wheelchair accessible vehicles in accordance with Sec 167 Equality Act 2010 in February 2011.
- 3.6 Duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs are contained in Sections 165, 166 and 167 of the Equality Act 2010 deal with the imposition of duties on the drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis and private hire vehicles to assist passengers who use wheelchairs.
- 3.7 The advice for drivers assisting disabled passengers covers a wide range of disabilities including wheelchair users to enable drivers to assist passengers more effectively.
- 3.8 Although government has not as yet come up with a definitive description with regard to what a wheelchair accessible vehicle looks like The Fed Centre for Independent Living that it will help proprietors when choosing vehicles to know the accessibility requirements that the licensing authority thinks fit. The ergonomics requirements contained in appendix 1 are taken from the Department for Transport guidance for accessible taxis.
- 3.9 Sections 160 to 172 of the Equality Act 2010 (commonly known as The Taxi Provisions) have not yet been fully implemented and further changes to the handbook may be necessary once implemented and further guidance published by the Government.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The amendments have been discussed at several meetings of the Brighton and Hove Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Consultation Forum.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

Revenue: Any costs associated with additions to the Blue Book have been met from within existing Taxi Licensing revenue budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Karen Brookshaw Date: 26/09/11

5.2 Legal Implications:

The Council is not statutorily required to produce a Handbook for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators. However, it is a useful way of imparting information to the existing trade and potential drivers, proprietors and operators. The additional information proposed for inclusion in

the Blue Book will assist the trade in meeting its obligations under the Equality Act, 2010, once the relevant provisions are in force.

Lawyer Consulted:

Name Liz Woodley

Date: 05/10/11

5.3 Equalities Implications:

Many decisions made by the Licensing Committee have been in support of the council's Single Equality Scheme objective to improve disabled people's access to hackney carriage and private hire services, and these have now been incorporated in The Blue Book. As a result of the Equality Impact Assessment of Taxi/Private Hire Licensing, changes have been made that positively impact on equality and inclusion generally.

Sections 160/172 of the Equality Act 2010 (commonly known as The Taxi Provisions) have not yet been fully implemented and will be the subject of an amendment to the Blue Book at the appropriate time. However, the Committee decided in February 2011 to compile a list of Designated Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in accordance with Sec 167.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

The role of the taxi trade is included in the Local Transport Plan, which identifies it as a key element in providing sustainable transport choices. It creates important links in the transport network to other forms of sustainable transport providing a seamless connection. It will contribute to three of the government's four shared transport priorities – reducing congestion, improving air quality and accessibility. Use of taxis for school transport, licensed vehicles using bus lanes, locating ranks at railway stations and the city coach station, approved use of liquid petroleum gas all contribute to reducing congestion and moving passengers quickly.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Sufficient late night transport to reduce public place violent crime is recognised in the community safety, crime reduction and drugs strategy. The presence of CCTV can be an important means of deterring and detecting crime and increasing the safety of passengers and drivers.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

The transport industry should be safe, profitable and be a positive experience for residents and visitors.

5.7 Public Health Implications:

None.

5.8 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Tourism needs to provide a warm welcome to visitors and the tourism strategy

depends upon effective partnership with transport operators particularly to achieve safe late night dispersal for the night time economy.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Consideration to providing / sourcing a separate booklet is being undertaken for accessibility advice.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To ask members to approve additions to the Handbook for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire, Drivers, Vehicles and Operators. "The Blue Book".

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Additions to the Handbook for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire, Drivers, Vehicles and Operators.

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None.

Background Documents

1. None.

